

# Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

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THE FULNESS OF JESUS THE TREASURY OF SAINTS.

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## A Sermon

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“Of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.”—John i. 16.

THESE are not words spoken by John the Baptist, as a cursory reader might imagine, but they were written by John the Evangelist. The verse preceding is a paragraph cast into the midst of the gospel, causing a temporary break. Omitting that verse, we read as follows: “The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth; and of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.” In its more limited meaning, as it stands in its connection, the text appears to teach that while Jesus Christ dwelt on earth, there was a divine glory about his person and character, which his apostles and disciples clearly beheld, perceiving in him and in his teaching a fulness of grace and truth; and further, that this grace and truth were divinely contagious, so that the disciples participated therein, and men took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus and learned of him; this being especially true of the apostles, who drank most fully into the life and power of Jesus, and continued to reveal to the world, after their Master was taken up, the grace and truth of the gospel committed to them.

But this passage is not to be restricted to so limited a sense: it is of far wider range and of much greater depth. We understand it of our Lord Jesus in the whole of his character and work; looking beyond his earthly life we see him in his crucifixion, his resurrection, his ascension, his session at the right hand of God and his Second Advent, and beholding him as the all-sufficient Saviour, we this day behold his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth; and *we*, that is, the whole range of the saints in all ages past and in all periods to come, *we* receive out of this fulness superabundant grace.

I. In discussing this text, I shall first remind you of the ONE GLORIOUS PERSON concerning whom this verse is written. There are other persons in the verse, but they are comparatively insignificant.

“All we” are mentioned as the receivers; we occupy the humblest place, but the one throne of the text (and a glorious high throne it is) is reserved for him who is intended in the pronoun “his:” “Of *his*

fulness have all we received ;” we know that this is no other than that august personage whom John calls “The Word,” or the speech of God ; so called, because God in nature has revealed himself, as it were, inarticulately and indistinctly, but in his Son he has revealed himself as a man declares his inmost thoughts, by distinct and intelligible speech. Jesus is to the Father what speech is to us ; he is the unfolding of the Father’s thoughts, the revelation of the Father’s heart. He that hath seen Christ hath seen the Father. “Wouldst thou have me see thee ?” said Socrates, “then speak ;” for speech reveals the man. Wouldst thou see God ? Listen to Christ, for he is God’s Word, revealing the heart of Deity.

Lest, however, we should imagine Jesus to be a mere utterance, a mere word spoken and forgotten, our apostle is peculiarly careful that we should know that Jesus is a real and true person, and therefore tells us that the divine Word, out of whose fulness we have received, is most assuredly God. No language can be more distinct. He ascribes to him the eternity which belongs to God : “In the beginning was the Word.” He peremptorily claims divinity for him : “The Word was God.” He ascribes to him the acts of God : “Without him was not anything made that was made.” He ascribes to him self-existence, which is the essential characteristic of God. “In him was life.” He claims for him a nature peculiar to God : “God is light, and in him is no darkness at all,” and the Word is “the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” No writer could be more explicit in his utterances ; and beyond all question he sets forth the proper deity of that Blessed One of whom we all must receive if we would obtain eternal salvation.

Yet John does not fail to set forth that our Lord was also man. He saith, “the Word was made flesh”—not merely assumed manhood, but was made ; and made not merely man, as to his nobler part, his soul, but man as to his flesh, his lower element. Our Lord was not a phantom, but one who, as John declares in his epistle, was touched and handled. “The Word dwelt among us.” He tabernacled with the sons of men—a carpenter’s shed his lowly refuge, and the caves and mountains of the earth his midnight resort in his after life. He dwelt among sinners and sufferers, among mourners and mortals, himself completing his citizenship among us by becoming obedient to death, even the death of the cross. See, then, my beloved brethren, where God has treasured up the fulness of his grace. It is in a person so august that heaven and earth tremble at the majesty of his presence, and yet in a person so humble that he is not ashamed to call us “brethren.”

The apostle, lest we should by any means put a second person in comparison with the one and only Christ, throughout this chapter continually enters caveats and disclaimers against all others. He bars the angels and shuts out cherubim and seraphim by saying, “Without him was not anything made that was made !” At the creation of the world no ministering spirit may intrude a finger ; angels may sing over what Jesus creates, but as the builder of all things he stands alone. Further on, the apostle guards the steps of the throne against John, and virtually against all the other witnesses of the Messiah ; albeit among those that are born of women there was not a greater than John

the Baptist, yet, "he was not that Light." The stars must hide their heads when the sun shines; John must decrease and Christ must increase. Nay, there was one whom all the Jews revered and whose name is coupled with that of the Lamb in the triumphant song of heaven; they sang the song of Moses, the servant of God, and of the Lamb. But even he is excluded from the glory of this text, "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Moses must sit down at the foot of the throne with the tables of stone in his hands, but Jesus sits on the throne and stretches out the silver sceptre to his people. Lest there should remain a supposition that another person yet unmentioned should usurp a place, the apostle adds, "No man at any time hath seen the Father." The best and holiest have all alike been unable to look into that excellent glory; but the Word has not only seen the Father, but has declared him unto us.

The text is as Tabor to us, and while in its consideration, at the first we see Moses and Elias and all the saints with the Lord Jesus, receiving of his fulness, yet all these vanish from our minds, and our spirit sees "no man, but Jesus only." Gazing into this text, one feels as John did when the gates of heaven were opened to him and he looked within them, and he declared, "I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the Mount Zion." He saw other things afterwards, but the first thing that caught his eye and retained his mind was the Lamb in the midst of the throne. Brethren, it becomes us as ministers, to be constantly making much of Christ, to make him indeed the first, the last, and the midst of all our discourses, and it becomes all believers, whenever they deal with matters of salvation, to set Jesus on high and to crown him with many crowns. Give him the best of your thoughts, and works, and affections, for he it is who fills all things, and to whom all things should pay homage.

II. Secondly, there are TWO PRECIOUS DOCTRINES in the text.

The first doctrine teaches us that in this glorious person of Jesus all fulness is treasured up, and the second, without which the first might yield us little comfort, that all this treasure of grace is received by his saints, so that all his saints receive all they have that is gracious and truthful from himself.

1. First consider this master truth, *that all grace is treasured up in Christ Jesus.* "His fulness," says the text. Ah! what a word, "His fulness!" If I had no other text given me to preach from until all preaching should be ended, this might suffice. *His fulness!* O brethren, here is a fulness which cannot be measured for length, or breadth, or depth, for he is filled with all the fulness of God. "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." The fulness of which the text speaks particularly is his double fulness of grace and truth. There is in Jesus Christ a fulness of essential grace, for it is his nature to overflow with free mercy to the miserable sons of men. It was a fulness of grace in him that made him enter into the eternal covenant and undertake suretyship engagements for us; it was a fulness of love and grace which sustained him in the discharge of his liabilities as our Great Substitute, and the fulness of grace it is which constrains him still to persevere in his work, saying, "For Zion's sake I will not rest, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not hold my peace." In Christ there is

a fulness of grace to impart to us, and to that the text refers a fulness of pardoning grace, so that no sin can ever exceed his power to forgive; a fulness of justifying grace, so that he justifieth the ungodly; a fulness of converting grace, so that he calleth to him whom he pleases; a fulness of quickening grace, for "He quickeneth whom he will." Here is a fulness of purifying grace, for his blood cleanseth us from all sin, and a further fulness of comforting grace, of sustaining grace, of satisfying grace, of restoring grace—Jesus has a fulness in whatever office you regard him, and with whatsoever needs.

He is never limited in any gift or grace, but always full thereof. This fulness time would fail us to rehearse. Drink you of it; plunge you into it, and you shall know far more than I by any possibility can tell. This, however, I may say—the fulness which dwells in Christ is from the text clearly proved to be an abiding fulness, for, mark, "All we," saith he, "have received of it;" and yet he calls it a "fulness" still. It was a fulness before a single sinner came to it to receive pardon—before a solitary saint had learned to drink of that river the streams whereof make glad the church; and now, after thousands, and even myriads of blood-redeemed saints, have drank of this life-giving stream, it is just as overflowing as ever. We are accustomed to say, that if a child takes a cupful from the sea it is just as full as before, but that is not literally true, there must be just so much the less of water in the ocean; but it is literally true of Christ, that when we have not only taken out cups full—for our needs are too great to be satisfied with such small quantities—when we have taken out oceans full of grace—and we want as much as that to carry us to heaven—there is actually as much left. Although we each have drawn upon the exchequer of his love to an extent so boundless that we cannot understand it, yet there is as much mercy and grace left in Christ as there was before, and it is a "fulness" still, after all the saints have received of it.

Brethren, there is a fulness of truth in our Lord as well as grace, that is to say, everything which Christ says is not only true, but emphatically true; and not only true in one sense, but true in multiplied senses—true to the letter and to the jots and to the tittles; true to-day and true to-morrow, and true for ever; true to one saint and true to every saint; true at one season and true in all seasons. There is a blessed emphasis of divine reality in Christ Jesus. Every word he speaks is as the decree of God; every doctrine that he promulgates is clear as the great white throne. In him there is no admixture of error. "Never man spake like this man," because his teaching is unalloyed gold. All doctrine which he reveals is as pure and celestial as the dew from heaven. Brethren, there is an abiding fulness of truth in Christ; after you have heard it for fifty years, you see more of its fulness than you did at first. Other truths weary the ear. I will defy any man to hold together a large congregation, year after year, with any other subject but Christ Jesus. He might do it for a time; he might charm the ear with the discoveries of science, or with the beauties of poetry, and his oratory might be of so high an order that he might attract the multitudes who have itching ears, but they would in time turn away and say, "This is no longer to be endured. We know it all." All music becomes wearisome but that of heaven; but oh! if the minstrel doth

but strike this celestial harp, though he keepeth his fingers always among its golden strings, and be but poor and unskilled upon an instrument so divine, yet the melody of Jesus' name, and the sweet harmony of all his acts and attributes, will hold his listeners by the ears and thrill their hearts as nought beside can do. The theme of Jesus' love is inexhaustible, though preachers may have dwelt upon it century after century, a freshness and fulness still remain.

2. The second doctrine is that *all the saints have received all of grace out of the fulness of Christ*. It is not one saint who has derived grace from the Redeemer, but all. "Of his fulness have all we received." And they have not merely derived a part of the blessings of grace from Jesus, but all that they ever had they received from him. It would be a wonderful vision if we could now behold passing before us the long procession of the chosen, the great and the small, the goodly fellowship of apostles, the noble army of martyrs, the once weeping but now rejoicing band of penitents. There they go! Methinks I see them all in their white robes, bearing their palms of victory. But you shall not, if you stay the procession at any point, be able to discover one who will claim to have obtained grace from another source than Christ; nor shall one of them say, "I owed the first grace I gained to Christ, but I gained other grace elsewhere." No, the unanimous testimony is "of his fulness have all we received." My inner eye beholds the throng as the procession pauses before the throne. Oh! see you not, how every man prostrates himself before the throne of the Lamb, and altogether they cry, "Of his fulness have all we received." Whoever we may be, however well we may have served our Master, whatever of honour we have gained, though our Lord has helped us to finish our course and to win the prize, yet it is all of him—"Non nobis Domine!" Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name be all the praise.

What a precious truth, then, we have before us, that all the saints in all ages have been just what you and I must be to-night if we would be saved—receivers. They did not any one of them bring anything to Christ, but received from him. If they at this moment cast their crowns at his feet, their crowns were first given to them by him. Their robes are wedding garments of his providing. The whole course of saintship is receptive. None of the saints talk of what they gave; none of them speak of what came of themselves, but they all bear testimony without a solitary exception that they were all receivers from Jesus' fulness. Oh, but this casts mire into the face of human self-sufficiency! What, not one saint who had a little of his own? Not one of all the favoured throng who could furnish himself? No, not one. Did none of them look to the works of the law? No, they all went to Jesus and his grace, and none to Moses and the law. Did none of them trust in priests of earthly anointing? Did none of them bow down before holy fathers and saintly confessors to obtain absolution? There is not a word said about such gentry, nor even a syllable concerning appeals to saints and saintesses, but all the saved ones received direct "from his fulness" who filleth all in all.

I must not leave this second doctrine, however, without noting that these receptive saints received very abundantly. They drew from an abundance, even a fulness; and they also drew largely, as indicated by

the words, "and grace for grace," which words are only difficult to understand by reason of the extent of meaning hidden in them, for they might be translated a dozen ways with equal accuracy. Do they not mean this?—Just as Samson slew so many Philistines that he cried out, "Heaps upon heaps," so our Lord has given to his people grace at such a rate that they have grace upon grace for abundance. They have received from him such a plenty, such a *pleroma* of grace and truth, that as the ancients fabled Mount Pelion to be piled upon Ossa by the giants, to make a staircase to the skies, so our great Saviour has piled mountains of grace upon mountains of grace, that on these, as on a stupendous ladder, his elect might climb to the throne of God. Yet not one step to heaven is other than of grace: all comes out of his fulness.

III. We advance to the third point, and mark **THREE EXPERIENCES** indicated by the text.

And first, beloved in the Lord, if you and I would receive of the fulness of Christ, it is imperatively necessary that we should have an experience of *our own emptiness*. All saints receive of Christ, but no vessel can receive beyond the measure of its emptiness. The more full it is, so much the less is its capacity for reception, and the more empty it is, so much the greater the space which can be filled. This is a hard lesson for human nature, for we firmly believe in ourselves. Thou sayest, "I am rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing;" we learn this with our mother tongue, and we repeat it so often that we believe it, and like the Pharisee, make it our daily boast, "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are." The Pharisee would see no chaff in his wheat, whereas grace makes us to be like the publican, who could see no wheat in his chaff, and would only say, "God be merciful to me a sinner." It is hard going down the ladder of self-knowledge. We give up with great reluctance our flattering opinions of ourselves. We are hard to empty of the notion of our own inherent merit; and if the Lord spills that upon the ground, we then hold to the idea of our own inherent strength. What if we have no merit, yet at least we will have some by-and-by, and we spin out our poor resolves as freely as a spider spins her web, and the fabric is as frail. And if our notion of power be taken from us, we then betake ourselves to our self-justification, by endeavouring to persuade ourselves that we are not responsible; or wrapping ourselves in despair, we declare that we cannot help ourselves, and wickedly cast our ruin upon destiny. Man is hard to be dragged away from the rock of self-justification. Like Theseus in the old mythology, he is glued so fast to the great stone of self-conceit which lies hard by the gates of hell, that a stronger than Hercules is needed to tear him from it; and even such a deliverer must rend him from it, leaving the skin behind. When the Lord comes and makes the sinner stand before his bar and plead, "Lord, I am guilty," the man is made ready to receive of Christ's merits because he is emptied of his own. Hear him again: "Lord, I would fain repent and believe, but oh! for this I have no strength; be thou my helper." The man's own power is gone, and with it his hardness of heart. He confessed that he has wilfully and wickedly sinned, and now the Lord pours of his grace and mercy. Our Lord withholds from those who are full, but he is always ready to give to those who are empty. Never

does he keep back anything from those who are consciously in need. Never does he give aught to those who say they need nothing. There must be in each of us, then, an emptiness of self if we are to enjoy the fulness of Christ.

But he who knows the emptiness of self is not therefore saved. The man who knows he has the fever, is not cured by that knowledge. The man who knows he is condemned to die, is not for that reason pardoned. It is a dreadful thing to stop short with a mere sense of sin; we must go on to the second experience—a *personal reception of Christ Jesus*. Here I shall put the question to each of my hearers, especially to professors of religion, Have you received out of Christ's fulness? I am not asking you whether you are church members. We sorrowfully know that it is one thing to be that, and quite another thing to receive Christ. I do not ask you whether you received the ordinance of the Lord's-supper. Alas! to receive bread and wine is a very different thing from feeding upon the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ. The one is a carnal act which Judas might perform, who had a devil, but the other is a spiritual act, possible only for spiritual men. "Oh," saith one, "do not put high standards before us." No, I am not. I am putting the lowest standard that can prove a soul to be saved—have you received Christ? I want to call your attention to the marvellous simplicity of this one act by which salvation comes to all the saints. It is receiving. Now, receiving is a very easy thing. There are fifty things which you and I cannot do, but, my dear friend, you could undoubtedly receive a guinea, could you not? There is not a man, nor woman, nor child, here, so imperfect in power as to be unable to receive. Everybody seems capable of receiving to any amount. Mark, then, in salvation you do nothing but merely receive. There is a hand, a beggar's hand, and if it be wanted to write a fair letter, it cannot do that, but be assured it can receive. Try it, and the beggar will soon let you know. Look at that hand again, see you not that it has the palsy? It quivers and shakes! Ah, but it can receive for all that. Many a palsied hand has received a jewel. But do not you see that in addition to being black, and filthy, and palsied, it has a foul disease? The leprosy lies within, and is not to be washed out by any mode of purification known to us, and yet it can receive. The saints all came to be saints, and remained saints, through doing exactly what that poor black, leprous, quivering hand can do. All their grace came by receiving. So, dear hearer, I am not setting up a high test, though I am assuredly setting up a very safe and needful one. Have you received out of the fulness of Christ? Did you come all empty handed and take Jesus Christ to be your all? I know what you did at first. You were for accumulating the shining heaps of your own merits, and esteeming them as if they were so much gold, but you found out that your labour profited not, so at last you came empty handed, and said, "My precious Saviour, do but give me thyself and I will have done with merit. I renounce all merit, and all doing and working, and I take thee to be everything to me." Then, friend, you are saved if that be true, for the acceptance of Christ is the mark of the saint.

I said there were three experiences: the first was emptiness; the second is receiving; and the third is that blessed experience, *the discovery*

*that all we receive comes to us by grace.* Look at the last words, "And grace for grace," which words may be read, "And grace because of grace;" that is to say, the only reason why we get grace is because of grace. Grace is the cause of itself. It is a self-creating thing. God will have mercy on whom he will have mercy. He is gracious because he is gracious, and he gives grace to men not because they deserve it, or ask for it, but because he is gracious, and chooses to bless them. I trust, beloved brethren, you all have experienced this. If you know your own emptiness and Christ's fulness, I am sure you know in a measure the doctrine of grace, and I hope you will go on to know it more and more. May you also get grace to have more grace; grace to qualify you for a higher degree of grace. Now, you do not get some grace from God's grace, and then the rest from your own efforts, but every step you have to go from the gate of the City of Destruction up to the pearl-gate of the New Jerusalem, it is all grace. The road to glory is paved with stones of grace. The chariot in which we ride to heaven is all of grace. The strength that draws it, and the axle that bears it up, is all of grace and grace alone. In the whole covenant of grace, from the first letter of the charter down to its last word, there is nothing at all of merit or man's goodness, but it is grace, grace, grace. As grace laid the foundation, so grace brings out every stone, and as we sing—

"It lays in heaven the topmost stone,  
And well deserves the praise."

I cannot make out where some of the Lord's children get their creed from when they preach up the dignity and free will of man. There are good people, but who seem to me to use part of the speech of Ashdod, and only part of the speech of Jerusalem. To my mind, free will seems such an incongruity when tacked on to grace, and makes a man's ministry like Nebuchadnezzar's image, with its head of gold, and its feet of clay: the two things do not consort. O for a gospel that is all of a piece, that reveals the sinner as saved by grace from first to last, that God may have all the praise.

IV. As briefly as possible we shall speak of FOUR DUTIES.

1. First, if we have received from Christ all we have, then *let us praise him*. If we live on his fulness, let us magnify and bless his name. Gratitude is a natural virtue, and it ought always to be in us a spiritual grace. O let our tongues talk well of him to whom we owe everything! There was a poor man who was a pauper, but a kind friend had taken care of him, and the old man was never better pleased than when he could garrulously tell out his thanks to passing strangers. "That's a dear man who lives up at the white house there, sir? Do you see these clothes? He has given me all. I have not a rag on me but what is of his finding, and I have a nice little cottage down there, and, you know, he gave it to me—told me I might live there rent free. He lets me walk through his grounds, and tells me I am welcome to all I can desire." It was the old man's joy to expatiate upon the extraordinary goodness of his benefactor. I wish we all imitated him. Do you see anything that is happy and peaceful in me? It all came from Jesus. I am a poor worm with nothing at all in myself that I could boast of, but if there be anything at all that could commend the gospel, I received it

all from my dear Lord and Master, who has done more for me than tongue can tell. Brethren, speak more of him and sing more his praise. If you have the gift of song, never prostitute it (as I think it must be) to light, giddy, loose verses. Keep your sweetest notes for him. Music, reserve thy charms for him. If the things of this world might claim a note or two, yet, oh! let him have the loudest of your harmony. Ye daughters of Israel, go forth to meet your David; for if any of this world hath helped you, if Saul hath slain his thousands, this David hath slain his ten thousands. The mightiest of your foes he has overthrown. One of the best ways of praising Jesus is by trusting him more. Faith is often compact praise. A trustful heart has in it the quintessence of music. Jesus loves to be trusted: it is a true, if indirect, form of gratitude, when we repose confidence because of mercies received.

Once more, if you wish to praise the Prince of Peace, as I trust you do, go and beg harder of him. Go to him this very night and say—

“The best return for one like me,  
So wretched and so poor,  
Is from thy gifts to draw a plea,  
And ask thee still for more.”

You cannot do your Lord a better turn, nor make his heart more glad by way of praising him, than by opening your mouth wider than ever to-night, that thou mayst receive more out of his fulness than thou hast ever had since thou hast known him.

2. The second duty is this: if up till now we have received out of Christ's fulness, then *let us repair to him again*. As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye *in him*. I find it my best and safest way, and I recommend it to you all, to live daily on Christ, as I did when first I trusted in him. If I have ever known him at all, if he has ever been revealed to me and in me, if he has ever answered my prayers, if he has ever blessed me to your souls and made me the spiritual parent of any that are in the skies, I do know that I had it all from him, for I never had a grain of anything good of my own, but all my grace has been the free grant of his sovereign will. But, the devil says, “Ah, but you never knew Jesus!” Well, if I never did, I know what to do now; I will go to Jesus at once. If I never did go to him before, I will hasten to him now. Now, when I go to Jesus Christ in that way, not as a saint but as a sinner, not as a preacher but as a poor, miserable offender, I find my comfort return to me. I would like to be as a babe, always hanging on the breast of Jesus' love. I would like to be the fruit which remains on the bough and so grows ripe and sweet. I would like to be always locked up in Christ's buttry, and never to live on what I had aforetime fed on, but feeding evermore. To this duty I invite you to-night. If you have received, come and receive again; you have not received the whole of Christ's fulness yet. But all that is in Christ is meant to be received. Jesus Christ is like the sun, he is a storehouse of light, but the light is there to be shed abroad. He is like the clouds, a storehouse of waters, but all that is in him is to descend in showers upon thirsty souls. There is nothing in

Christ but what was meant to be distributed. He is like Joseph's granaries in Egypt, full of corn for hungry men. Dost thou read of mercy in Christ?—say, “That mercy was meant for a needy sinner: I will even have it.” Little children, when they come to table, seem to know by instinct that everything there is meant to be eaten; so they cry, “Give me this, give me that.” Now, in this be ye children. If you see anything in Christ, however rich and rare, however precious and choice, say, “Lord, give me that, and give me that;” for it is all meant to be given away—it is all provided on purpose to meet the needs of the Lord's people. So we leave that duty, but I trust not till we have attended to it.

3. The third duty is, if you have been receiving of Christ, *try to obtain more*; for the text says, “grace for grace”—that is, grace upon grace—grace to fit you for higher grace. If you are no richer than the old believers under the law, and you have found only Jewish grace, come and ask for clearer views; if you have grace as a babe, ask grace to be a young man; and if you have grown to be a young man, ask grace to be a father. Aspire to the highest point of Christian perfection. In other matters we are very covetous, but in the things of God, what an accursed contentment we soon fall into. I use the word advisedly, for it is accursed, since it brings the curse of barrenness upon us. I loathe to hear a believer say, “Well, if I am but just saved, that is enough for me; if I may but just get in behind the door in heaven, I shall be content.” So you will, my dear brother, but you ought not to talk in that way. Your business is to show forth as much of Christ to his glory as you possibly can. What! are you so selfish that if you can creep into heaven that will content you? I would like to carry my Master a whole casket of jewels in my bosom; I would fain say to him, “Here am I and the children whom thou hast given me.” I would desire to die with the sweet satisfaction, “I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of life that fadeth not away.” Do wrestle for more grace. If you are up to your ankles, wade into this river of gracious fulness up to your knees. If you are up to your knees, be thankful, but do not be content. I ask you to advance till you are up to your loins, and be not fully satisfied even then. Forget the things that are behind, be not satisfied till you find a river to swim in; strike out till you feel you are utterly out of your depth, and then dive into it and strike out; glory in Christ to think that it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell, and be glad that you have learned to comprehend with all saints what are the heights and depths, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.

4. The last duty and the last word. If you have received of Christ, *encourage others to receive of him*. Indeed, you need not go far

for the encouragement, for you may first of all look at home. If Jesus Christ received you, whom will he not receive? If my Master's heart opened wide its doors to let me in, I know he has received one of the blackest that ever was accepted; and I feel confident in recommending you, poor, needy, troubled, conscience-stricken sinner, to come to Jesus by simple trust to-night. I am sure if he had meant to reject you, he would not have accepted me. If you want to encourage souls to come to Christ, what a wonderful text this is: "Of his fulness have all we received." I must bring that little dream of mine up to your mind's eye again. There are all the saints—millions of them—and they tell you, all of them, that they were all receivers. Now, suppose you were a beggar. You know what beggars do. If they go to a door and get anything, they make a little mark; you and I do not understand it, but it means "Good house to knock at;" and the next beggar who comes sees that token, and he knocks boldly. If they get nothing, of course, they make some scurvy remark or another, after their own fashion, which the next beggar understands. Now, I have already made that mark on Christ's door, and I have told you of it; it is a good house to knock at, for I have tried it. But suppose, being a beggar, you were to meet some fifty or sixty tramps, all coming down the street, and they were to say to you, "Are you in the same trade as we are?" "Yes, I am a beggar." "Well," say they, "there's a good house down there, we have all of us been to it, and they have given us all something." "What, given something to all of you?" "Yes, to every one of us." "What, to that man yonder? why, he looks good for nothing!" "Ah, well, they gave him something." "What, to the whole of you?" "Yes." "Then I shall be as quick as I can to knock and get the next turn." Why, of course, everybody would feel that that is the shop to beg at where nobody has been rejected. Now, since the world began there never has been a sinner who sincerely asked for mercy through faith in the precious blood of Jesus who has been rejected. Since Adam was cast out of the garden, there has never been a sinner, whoever he might have been, that has cast himself by simple trust upon the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ, whom God has cast out. Well, but if they all received, and all received "of his fulness," why not you?

One thing more: it may be that you will still say, "Perhaps the Lord will change his mode of dealing, and reject me!" Oh, but let me tell you, he has pledged himself that he will not, for, in addition to all those who have received at his hands, there is a promise given, "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." He cannot cast you away, for he has said he will not, and that word "no wise" is like the flaming cherub's sword, which turns every way, not to keep you out of the garden of life, but to keep out all your doubts and fears.

Observe, "I will *in no wise* cast out." Then, if any man says, "But I am too old," that cannot be the reason for your rejection, for Christ has said, "Him that cometh, I will in no wise cast out." "Oh, but I have sinned beyond all reason, I have gone to an excess of riot: Sir, I'm a damnable sinner; no one can say too bad of me." I do not care what you are; he cannot cast you out, for he has said, "in no wise," that is, on no account, on no consideration, under no circumstances. If you come to Christ, heaven and earth may pass away, and yon blue sky shall be folded up and put away as a worn-out mantle, and the stars shall fall like withered leaves in autumn, and the sun be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood; but never shall a praying, trusting sinner be cast away from the presence of God. O come, then, thou most guilty, thou most empty, thou most worthless, come and welcome. Hark, the silver trumpet sounds to-night, "Come and welcome! come and welcome! come and welcome!" Come to the dear wounds of Jesus and be hidden there. Come to the fountain filled with blood, and be cleansed there. Come to the heart of Christ in heaven by trusting him, and be saved both now and ever. May God bless you, and every one in this great house to-night. May he bless every one of you young women up there, and of you men down there, and you strangers thronging the aisles; may every one of us have to say, "Of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace." The Lord bless you. Amen.

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PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON. John i. 1—18.

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